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The White House privately demanded Twitter ban me months before the company did so

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Federal officials targeted me specifically; when they met with Twitter in April 2021, "they really wanted to know about Alex Berenson"



Alex Berenson

Aug 12

Biden Administration officials asked Twitter to ban me because of my tweets questioning the Covid vaccines, even as company employees believed I had followed Twitter's rules, internal Twitter communications reveal.

In a White House meeting in April 2021, four months before Twitter suspended my account, the company faced "one really tough question about why Alex Berenson hasn't been kicked off from the platform," a Twitter employee wrote.

The employee recounted the meeting discussion afterwards on Twitter's internal Slack messaging system. The message, and others, make clear that top federal officials targeted me specifically, potentially violating my basic First Amendment right to free speech.

The First Amendment does not apply to private companies like Twitter. But if the companies are acting on behalf of the federal government they can become "state actors" that must allow free speech and debate, just as the government does.

Previous efforts to file state action lawsuits against the government and social media companies for working together to ban users have failed. Courts have universally held that people who have been banned have not shown the specific demands from government officials that are necessary to support state action claims.

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(Support freedom of speech!)



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In my case, though, federal officials appear to have gone far beyond generically encouraging Twitter to support Covid vaccines or discourage “misinformation” (i.e. information that the government does not like).

Instead, top officials targeted me personally.

Andrew Slavitt, senior advisor to President Biden’s Covid response team, complained specifically about me, according to a Twitter employee in another Slack conversation discussing the White House meeting.

“They really wanted to know about Alex Berenson,” the employee wrote. “Andy Slavitt suggested they had seen data viz [visualization] that had showed he was the epicenter of disinfo that radiated outwards to the persuadable public.”

According to an interview he gave to the Washington Post in June 2021, Slavitt worked directly with the most powerful officials in the federal government, including Ron Klain, President Biden’s chief of staff, and Biden himself.

The Slack conversations also show the pressure Twitter employees felt internally to respond to the government’s questions about whether the company was doing enough to suppress “misinformation” about Covid and the vaccines. An employee writes that the questions at the meeting were “pointed” but “mercifully, we had answers.”

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*(From Twitter’s internal Slack channel)*



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Channel: dm-[REDACTED]

Channel Type: Slack Channel Private

Start Date: 2021-04-22 13:14:03 UTC End date: 2021-04-22 13:20:21 UTC

[REDACTED] at 2021-04-22 13:14:03

How was WH:crossed\_fingers::skin-tone-3:!? .

[REDACTED] at 2021-04-22 13:15:59

Overall, pretty good! they had one really tough question about why Alex Berenson hasn't been kicked off from the platform; otherwise their questions were pointed but fair - and mercifully we had answers.

[REDACTED] at 2021-04-22 13:16:28

Correct

[REDACTED] at 2021-04-22 19:05:11

jw - any high level takeaways from the meeting? Anything we should keep an eye out for?

[REDACTED] at 2021-04-22 19:07:34

thanks for clarifying. and yes, they really wanted to know about Alex Berenson. Andy Slavitt suggested they had seen data viz that had showed he was the epicenter of disinfo that radiated outwards to the persuadable public.



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At the time, employees said internally they did not believe I had broken the company's rules. "I've taken a pretty close look at his account and I don't think any of it's violative," an employee wrote on the Slack conversation a few minutes after the "really tough question about why Alex Berenson hasn't been kicked off."

But the pressure on Twitter to take action against me and other mRNA vaccine skeptics steadily increased after that April meeting, and especially in July and August, as the government began to consider the unprecedented step of mandating Covid vaccines for adults.

On July 16, 2021, President Biden complained publicly that social media companies were "killing people" by encouraging vaccine hesitancy. A few hours after Biden's comment, Twitter suspended my account for the first time.

On August 28, 2021, barely four months after the meeting, Twitter banned me - for a tweet that it has now acknowledged "should not have led to my suspension."

I obtained the message and other documents related to Twitter's censorship of me as part of my lawsuit against Twitter over my August 2021 ban. I filed the suit in federal court in San Francisco in December 2021. Twitter and I settled it last month, when Twitter restored my account and acknowledged it had erred in banning me.

The documents contain other revelations, including emails showing that *other reporters* asked Twitter to take action against me; I will report on those in the future.

More messages, emails, and internal documents are expected.

## 308 Comments



Write a comment...



Pray4US Aug 12

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I guess if anyone needed proof of Brandon's involvement in the suppression of free speech, you have it.

♡ 384 Reply Collapse

6 replies



Gina Aug 12

This has to go before the Supreme Court while there is still one.

♡ 266 Reply Collapse

9 replies

306 more comments...

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